There are about 35 carpet dealers in business in Herat, all located in one building in the Old City. Business is slow but some export continues to Pakistan (there may be more Herati carpets in Peshawar and Islamabad than Herat). Dealers say they sell mostly to Afghans themselves who buy carpets as investments and hedges against rampant inflation. Foreign aid workers who aren't so careful about bargaining, are driving the prices upward.

Carpet dealers said, "if you want to help women, help sheep". The quality of wool on local sheep is good (medium length staple, medium crimp, medium lanolin content) but there are not nearly enough sheep so the price of wool is very high. If there were more sheep, the price of wool would come down and women would make a bigger profit on their carpets.

Carpet dealers also said there is excellent potential to revive natural dyes, as the local plants have not be exploited for so long. Madder, for red, grows locally.

The main market for Afghan carpets (according to UNCTAD/GATT data from the 1970's) was not where most people think. It wasn't Europe or USA. It was the Gulf States, with Jeddah as the hub. To get carpet exports rolling again, market stimulation through Jeddah should be explored.

In Baraman, a completely destroyed village just outside Herat City, I visited four families to see their carpet making started again. These families had all been refugees. When they returned in April of this year, they started re-building their houses by first building a room for the loom. The women in each household got busy making a carpet, while the men built the rest of the house around them.

The families said they expected to sell the carpets (each 1m. x 2m.) for 100,000-190,000 Afs ($80-$152), although this seemed more like what I'd heard as the asking (retail) price in the bazaar.

VULNERABILITIES

In general, carpet making has slowed down during the war, in some places ceased altogether. It has continued at very minimal levels in Herat due to destruction (lost houses and equipment), the flood of refugees, etc. Carpet export is at a virtual standstill. It is a vicious circle: low production gives little to export and exporters have their own war problems: dealers reported their main problems are: poor transportation, inability to get visas for the countries they used to sell in, and lack of availability of bank loans (to buy quantities to take on selling trips).

The quality has also suffered. The quality of craftsmanship is still very high and the locally grown wool is of considerably higher quality than that of Pakistan. But design and colour are often poor, combining some Iranian influence with unknown sources. Quality dyes from Germany are also not available.

Sheep alone have always been a major industry in Afghanistan. Data from 1969-70 (Louis Dupree's "Afghanistan,pg 48) says that there were 21 million sheep in the country then, three times the number of cattle, goats, donkeys, horses and camels combined. It is common knowledge that sheep stocks have drastically decreased and the last time I checked with UNDP, there are no known projects in the country at all in sheep breeding or health (except for a few vaccination programmes).

b)iii) Silk Industry

CAPACITIES

Prior to the war, Herat was one of the country's three main silk producing areas and as such a major income earner for women (and the country as the region was self-sufficient in silk and exported it.) This is one industry virtually owned by women as they do 95% of the work, involved as a cottage industry.

How it worked: The government of Herat Sericulture Farm bred eggs and distributed or sold them to village women to raise through the worm, larvae and caccoon stages by feeding them mulberry

leaves grown at home (men bring the leaves). Women then sold the cacoons or prepared thread back to government (for export) or used the thread in carpet making or fabric weaving.

While buildings and equipment at the Sericulture Farm are now unworkable and there's no money, Sericulture farm workers have not sat around waiting for something to do. From the mulberry bushes that survived, they've propagated dozens of hectares of new bushes. These new bushes might be able to serve as some of the regenerative stock needed by women at home.

In 1992, FAO began stimulating the silk industry by supplying 10,000 boxes of imported eggs to the women of the west and north of Afghanistan, through Herat's Sericulture Farm and production, according to FAO monitoring was excellent- up to 35 kg. cacoons a box when 25 kg. is considered a very high yield (this produces 4-5 kg. of silk thread, enough for 2-3, 2m. carpets). This also means that some homes still have their bushes!

VULNERABILITIES

FAO is working in co-operation with the government Sericulture Farm but it is unable to function: buildings and equipment are damaged. FAO states that silk is outside their mandate and will not likely be able to repeat help and give any new help. Both govt. and FAO prefer to get the farm working again, supply eggs to the farm for their own regenerative breeding programme (so imports are not necessary). For roughly $300,000, in 3 years, the farm could be repaired, equipment replaced and indigenous egg production be back to at least pre-war levels of 15,000 boxes per year. This would mean income for hundreds, possibly thousands of women.

But bushes in many villages, along with everything else, were destroyed. They will need to be started again at home before they can proceed with the silk.

b)iv) Food Prices

The supply is quite plentiful but prices, by local standards are outrageous (note government workers' wages below).

The following prices are from UNHCR's weekly price survey (July 22/93):

-1 kg. rice:	875 Afs.	-1 kg. cooking oil:	1,060
-1 kg. wheat:	182	-1 kg. tomatoes:	1,400
-1 kg. beef:	1,900	-1 kg. mung beans:	400
-1 kg. mutton:	1,700	-1 bar soap:	140
-1 med. chicken:	9,000	-1 local bread:	40

Most of the food is locally grown with a little imported from Iran. The rice bazaar in the Old City is overflowing with huge bags of rice, raisons and many kinds of beans. A merchant said all was grown in Herat or Badghris, except for the kidney beans from Iran.

b)v) Wages and Prices

The government of Herat is paying employees only nominal wages:

-director provincial hospital:	10,000 Afs./m ($8)
-teacher	5,000 Afs./m ($4)
-soldier	2,000-3,000 Afs./m ($2)

-Each is supposed to also receive rations but most have received none in the past many months. All work half days, most look for jobs in the afternoon.

-Note the above food prices. How can anybody afford to eat? If a school teacher spent all her salary on rice alone, she would get only a little over 5 kg. A soldier would need to spend his whole month's salary on a kg. of beef.

-The vast majority of the population, of course, does not even make a government salary. Some of the poorest women in the city are taking in washing, for which they might make 800 Afs ($0.64) per day. Actual case: A widowed grandmother, with no sons, her only son-in law recently killed in an accident. She has four dependents. From washing clothes, she makes 800 Afs. a day and has no other income. If she and her family eat only once or twice a day, what could they afford?

b)vi) UN/NGO Wage Scales

A Peshawar problem being repeated in Herat is severe, to the level of absurdity. UN and NGOs are vastly out-paying government.

- -NGO A: salaries range (per month) from 60,000 to 400,000 Afs($48-320)
- -NGO B: salaries range (per month) from 92,500 to 555,000 Afs($74-444)
- -UN Agency for physician in same above provincial hospital........770,000 Afs ($616)

-Using the hospital director (who I never met) as a landmark figure; the lowest NGO chowkidar is paid at least six times what he makes. A top NGO employee makes 55 times what he makes. A physician paid by UN at the provincial hospital makes 77 times what his boss is paid.

-Except for the mentioned physician all other salaries above are for people hired in Herat: these are not for workers sent from Peshawar (those salaries are **much!** higher).

-The UN and NGOs rationalize these high wages a) as actually being closer to the cost of living b) most government workers have other jobs anyway (don't know if this is true) c) a government job is a life time job and UN and NGO jobs are only temporary d) government jobs are only half days but UN and NGO people work all day, etc. The UN is paying far higher than NGOs.

-The fact of the matter is that these wages **must** have a destabilizing effect on government.

-New aid programmes to be set-up are stuck in this dilemma. If you don't compete with government (same pay) you will instantly lose employees to better paying NGOs or UN.

-Ismail Khan's office told me that the government has offered to supply skilled people to the UN and NGOs and pay their salaries at government rates. But nobody has taken them up on this offer. Aid agencies told me this would be too confusing: who would be working for who?

b)vii) Bazaar Activity

CAPACITIES

The truly big mystery in Herat is who can afford all the stuff in the bazaars? They are absolutely packed with goods. The Afghan entrepreneurial spirit is very alive and very well, with gigantic trucks on the road, bringing goods from Iran, Turkmanistan, Pakistan and probably China. With all these shops in business and the streets bustling, somebody must be making money somehow but I could never find out who it is or how.

In a walk around town you will see; Hong Kong watches, bungi cords, pink gingham, 2 drawer steel file cabinets, large cassette players, Sony colour TVs and VCRs, canvas made in Herat, Toyota spare parts, German shampoo, Cocoa Cola "Bottled in Afghanistan", 35 mm. film, gold lame yardage, toilet paper in many shops, an overflowing cooking pot bazaar with all the pots made on site, "ladies shops" selling the latest European and American colognes, cosmetics, sequined dresses and flowered, footless tights (1,700 Afs. from Taiwan). A dress shop, near the hospital is set back behind the pine trees. The trees, glossy white paint, sparkling windows and display give it the look of London, Paris, New York or Yorkville, Toronto. A single dress hangs in the window (green satin with black lace) and is changed every day (red, slim skirted with shoulder padding).

Then you go on down the street and a very old woman, in torn clothes, bent over; asks you not for money, but for a job. Right near-by are the Mongolian yurts and the dozens of IOM trucks, loaded with refugees and their goods going home, the sand and dust flying around in the never ending July wind.

c) Education

VULNERABILITIES

The Government's department of Education reports that the main educational problems are:

- the loss of 90% of the province's schools (destroyed)
- lack of trained teachers (50% of teachers have no training at all)
- shortage of books and materials (greatest need is for lowest and highest grades. 30,000 copies of Book One for the first grade and other books for the 9th to 12th grades are needed).
- underpayment of teachers

CAPACITIES

Education is now completely under the provincial government's Directorate of Education. The Director, Mr. Riasad Taleem Tarbia, states that in 1993, 150,000 students are attending school in the province, from first to twelfth class, 50,000 of these are girls. 300 schools are operating but these are outdoors as this many were destroyed.

Since the communists fell a year and a half ago, and security conditions have greatly increase (bombing, shooting, boys' conscription stopped) attendance has jumped enormously. The Director said that 63 schools were operating before the change in government and now there are the 300. I failed to get pre-change attendance data but in one school that seemed fairly representative (Gowardshah Girls School) attendance has jumped from 750 to 2,000. For two weeks in July, this school (classes 1-12) was a bee hive of exam writing.

In the city at least, education is an extremely active field. All five girls "high schools" (class 1-12) are operating at over capacity: it is said that there are more women teachers at work than men teachers (and some men teach in the girls schools). Other schools visited were the biggest boys school in the province (classes meeting in the halls and on the verandah), a kodakistan (kindergarten) of the government having 600 pre-schoolers (some orphans, some children of working mothers). In some cases, schools are operating on morning and afternoon shifts. These city school buildings are in rough condition.

The Department of Education has set up special "night schools" (4-6 PM) for young Mujahideen, 16 years and older to learn the same subjects as younger students. The Department plans to expand this programme for 80,000 Mujahideen and refugees returning from Iran but needs outside assistance to do so.

The Institute of Pedagogy is operating and the Director of Education says 500 teachers are in the process of being trained. A limited amount of help is coming from Peshawar; mainly from UNO, I believe mainly in form of textbooks (and some support for this teacher training) although there still the above extreme shortages.

University of Herat

The University of Herat was re-opened under the Mujahideen government last year and is operating at close to full capacity with 321 students in two shifts; 125 women in the morning and 196 men in the afternoon. There are six faculties; art/design, agriculture, economics, engineering, sharia and medicine (M.D. degrees offered. This faculty located on the hospital grounds). There are 25 full time teachers and 20 volunteer teachers.

(Note: If any readers need inspiration about Afghanistan, think of it this way. Okay, the university was actually opened six years ago for the first time by the communist government. But it operating now means Herat's first univerity in 500 years: when Herat was a world leader in intellectual, scientific, artistic and other contributions. (see history). Even if it takes 5 centuries to get something started again, Afghans will do it!)

The president of the university, Noor Al Haq Saba, is an energetic, enthusiastic man, unusually young for this kind of position. He's trying whatever he can think of to really get the university rolling. For instance, he is attempting to establish relations with universities in other countries for visiting professors, seminars and other purposes. Recently a delegation from a German University visited the university to consider offering such help in the economics faculty. Except for some brief contact with FAO, the president says no UN agency or NGO has visited the university.

Classes visited in the art faculty showed concentration on the study of Herat. Painters are doing a poor version of miniature painting and beginning to paint the scenes of local destruction. The folklore class was studying the words of children's traditional songs which they have collected from elders.

President Saba expressed extremely strong desire and excitement to start a library. He suggested it be one which university students could use but be located off-campus "where anyone could use it". "We have only a few art books," he said, "no library." He said if books and information could be provided, he could arrange for the government plane to transport them from Peshawar to Herat and he would find a suitable public place for them: he suggested a separate room in the building to become a museum.

(In the painting class I realized maybe **here** was my answer, and sure enough! From Peshawar, I had come with some little missions assigned by Afghan colleagues in Peshawar. One was for a colleague who had been involved in the establishment of a calligraphy museum at the Grand Mosque in 1978, but he soon had to flee as a refugee. He wanted to know if it still existed. At the Grand Mosque no one knew what I was talking about: it no longer existed there. I figured (like my colleague dreaded) that it had met its demise. But in the painting class, I asked if students had heard of the calligraphy. They instantly pointed, smiling proudly at President Saba, who was standing nearby. Saba had heard that the communists were loading goods out of the Herat museum (to take to destinations unknown, but likely the USSR) and somehow he personally rescued the calligraphy and hid it. It is in storage again at the Herat museum (Saba is also connected with the museum some how) and will be on display when it re-opens. This calligraphy was done in the 1970's by Herat's last master calligrapher who died last year.)

d) Health

VULNERABILITIES

Although surveillance to positively identify diseases and their prevelance has not yet occurred, WHO states the following as the main health problems in Herat and they are major problems:

- -tuberculosis
- -leshmani (ulcers on exposed parts of body)
- -malaria (outside the city)
- -diarhea (especially of children, summer and winter)

-Over the years, MSH, Avicenne, UNICEF, Health Committee of the South West (Afghan NGO) have been vaccinating but coverage has not been enough to halt the childhood diseases.

-WHO knows of no studies on the health of women in Herat but reports that the most common problem of women seen at the only functioning hospital is gynecological infections.

-The hospital sees 3-4 landmine accidents per week.

-Despite the lack of data on health, Afghanistan is known to have some of the lowest health conditions in the world. UNICEF's State of the Worlds' Children (1993) and other studies show that Afghanistan ranks second from highest in the world in mother and child death rates (after Mozambique). Despite the following list of services, there are no indications that Herat's death rates are any higher or lower than the national average.

Health Organization, Facilities, Programmes

Health is organized under the local government's Directorate of Public Health through which all WHO, UNICEF and NGO health activities are implemented.

Facilities:

-The province has one functioning hospital, the government's provincial hospital in Herat city. 200-250 beds. Serves about 1,000 patients per day.

-In the same compound as the hospital is a maternity/gynecological department

-the province's only Mother-Child Health centre is also located on the grounds of this hospital

-two other hospitals exist in the province; at Zindajan and Ghorain, but they were closed during the war due to damage and lack of equipment.

Other Facilities:

Herat City:

-outpatient clinic, Iranian Red Crescent
-OMAR outpatient clinic, 50 patients per day
-2 government run clinics in the old city of Herat
-ICRC runs a workshop (not a hospital) for prosthesis, physiotherapy, etc. for the war wounded and disabled
-5 government-run public clinics
-"many" doctors in their own private practice
-there are about 15 dentists in private and possibly public practice, (one dentist said there is strong need and interest for up-grading training and dental hygiene posters, etc.)
-the Public Health Dept. and WHO have recently trained a group of trainers for Traditional Birth Attendants and some months ago introduced training for Volunteer Village Health Workers.

Outside the City:

-In the rural areas there is one Basic Health Unit per district (total 12). One is closed due to damage and all others need major repairs. UNICEF has done partial repair. The government runs these BHUs and supplies doctors. Using the above population figures, this means there is only one BHU per 68,727 people.

e) Communications

a) Roads: Somebody said they finally figured out why the Russians gave up on Afghanistan, "they got absolutely sick, tired and fed-up with the roads!" This pretty well sums up the condition of the tank-hammered paved road the Soviets built in the 1960's to join Herat and Kabul to the USSR. And side roads are worse or non-existent. It takes 2.5 hrs. to drive from Herat, 160 km. to Torghundi (Turkmanistan) on the "best" road of all, and 1 hr. to cover 20 km. other places is pretty ordinary.

-One NGO reported it taking 21 days to drive from Peshawar to Herat. This wasn't only road conditions, of course. Political road blocks get in the way.

-Drivers are now making it between Islamabad and Herat in 5 days, via Iran.

b) Mail: There isn't any. Except the government of Herat's Communications Dept. is handling some mail which goes to the government of Iran where it is sometimes opened and censored. Not many people use this "service".

c) **Telephone:** There is a government telephone hook-up between govt., UN and NGO offices and it works quite well. But long distance calls aren't possible.

d) **High Tech Communications:** In the midst of very long distances to anywhere, high tech has sprung up especially amongst UN agencies. There is satellite long distance ($10 per minute), a sitor system ("discussions" by computer) and Very High Frequency wireless radio, all powered by solar panels. DACCAR has satellite telex. All UN employees go around with walkie talkies and VHF's in their vehicles.

e) **TV:** The government has it's own TV station and broadcasts two hours each evening. They have their own film and video unit with a basic production studio. (The UN guest house has the only known satellite TV in town.)

f) **Air Connections:** The civilian airport, located 15 km south of the city, has the capacity for Boeing 727 landings and takeoffs. Ariana Airline occasionally flies between Kabul and Herat. The Herat government flies cargo planes around the country and to Pakistan but the safety of both Ariana and these cargo planes is in question. The only other flights are the private charters of UN and ICRC, operating from their bases in Islamabad and Peshawar respectively. Fuel is in short supply and flight availability is dictated by where, when and how much fuel is available.

g) **Ground Transportation:** If you go to Herat to visit villages you won't get there unless ahead of time you get guarantees of a vehicle and driver being available to you. There are taxis and horse carts in the city but the taxis are too decrepit to take out of the city. There are no vehicles to rent. On the other hand, the way things are going in the city, it would be no surprise if a car rental agency opened soon.

f) Landmines

The de-mining agencies have got a special job in Herat: their first attempt at demining in a city. At last count (last fall) there were nine minefields in the city and all especially dangerous due to dense-pack of houses, walls, etc. In July, the mine dogs arrived to assist in detecting mines for the Mine Clearing Planning Agency (MCPA). Herat demining is done by OMAR (formerly OMA, the Organization for Mine Awareness, which has branched out to do actual demining and other relief work).

In rural areas, there are mines and unexploded ordnances of unknown quantities. Very fortunately, the European Community recently started funding MCPA to carry out a national preliminary survey of mines and bombs. The survey is underway now in Herat province. The British Afghanistan Agencies Group (a new consortium) which is continually in villages far away from the city, carrying out a UNHCR shelter survey, report landmines as fairly common. At the same time, village people are reluctant to state the danger, not wanting to discourage visitors or make them afraid. When asked, in the survey if there are landmines present, the common answer is "only a few!"

g) Land Ownership

A few years ago it was speculated that there could be a lot of disputes in the country over who owns what land as refugees returned. This is not the case in Herat. The same survey group (BAAG, above) which has visited a hundred villages so far, say they have not encountered a single dispute. In fact, the opposite is true. The survey, on behalf of UNHCR, also provides villages with assistance packages (wheat and tools or rebuilding houses. Of special interest to UNHCR is to get housing built for vulnerable groups. Villages are quite enthusiastically accepting this as a condition of help and donating land for the houses, when needed.

h) History

For anybody interested in working in Herat it is positively necessary for us to study its history, because its ancient and new history is right there in front of us, in the monuments and probably even in the way that Heratis think. It is said that Herat, at least pre-war, had an unusually high concentration of educated people, both men and women, probably because of its history.

In the 15th and 16th centuries under the Timurid and Safavid dynasties, Herat flourished as one of the world's major centres of miniature painting, architecture, poetry, scientific, and intellectual development. Standing at the crossroads of the Silk Route between China and Europe, Herat was also a major economic and strategic centre, occupied 23 centuries ago in the 4th century B.C. by Alexander the Great, then again 700 years ago by Ghenghis Khan. Today's evidence of history still stands in the partly restored 10th century citadel fortress overlooking the city and 15th century monuments, which in 1975 had Herat designated by UNESCO as a world heritage site. Herat's Grand Mosque, recognized as one of the finest examples of Islamic architecture in the world, was originally constructed in 1,200 AD. It has not been damaged in this war. The citadel has had minor damage.

Perhaps the least appreciated and most important of the historical monuments: what remains of what is referred to as the Maddrassah or Mussala of Gowharshad. Towering above the city are five columns, that from a distance look like ugly factory smoke stacks (in fact are marked as such on one map). I was very fortunate to visit the site with an Afghan engineer who has made the site his study, and to have the picture pieced together again.

This was the site of what was, in the 14 hundreds, one of the main universities in the world. It's school of philosophy, astronomy, theology, miniature painting and architecture attracted and produced intellectuals from all over the Muslim world.

Spread out over about 20 acres around the towers - actually minarets but the distinctive minaret shape of the tops were shot off in the last century - is where the university complex used to be. When small details were pointed out, it was far easier to get an idea of the grandeur its own architecture was. Pieces of blue tile in complex patterns still cling to the leeward side. Very high up are moulded shapes to which other tile work was attached. Marks, easily five stories high, show how high the surrounding walls were. A mausoleum and tomb (now under restoration) located in the former complex, give hints as to the beauty of long gone domed buildings, gardens, fountains and pools.

What many Heratis are especially proud of was that it was a woman who had this complex built and opened the university: Queen Gowharshad (note name of girl's high school, in "Education"). The Afghan who showed me the site, explained it this way. "She was a queen of the Timerlane Dynasty. Her husband, Sultan Hussain, was the grandson of Timerlane, but she was a strong woman and just sort of took over. She built the university in 1474, then at the age of 80 her grandson ran her out of town to Bukhara". For visibilty purposes, the British demolished and cleared away remaining ruins in 1885, when a rumour spread that the Russians might attack.

A least one of the minarets has new damage from this war: a large rocketed hole in one side. Dead grass and bare sand is what connects these monuments now. The area was one of the city's minefields but it has recently been cleared. In an odd kind of contradiction, the demining agency OMAR, cleared the minarets of landmines then defaced one of them with graffiti: their own name three feet high in white paint.

War History:

More recent history keeps Herat in the forefront. It was where the first major up-rising happened following the communist coup d'etat in April 1978. Smaller up-risings occurred first in other places but in early 1979, Herati people showed the strongest reaction: they took control again of the government in Herat for three days. In response on February 24 ("Bist-o-Char-i-Hoot) the Kabul government flew jets from Shindon, the country's largest military airport located only 100 km. south of Herat city, over the city, bombing and strafing killing 20,000 people in one day.

Today, a memorial "Park of the Martyrs", lies east of the city: the site of mass graves. About 10 glass boxes, covered with metal awning, are sunk into the earth. Below ground, skulls, bones, bits of hair, torn clothing and plastic shoes remind visitors that this is where the national resistance and tragedy really began.

IV: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

a) Water

CAPACITIES

-The Harirud provides an ample supply of water to the Herat plain. No one controls the head water and the only dam(Salma Dam at Chesht) is controlled by the government of Herat.

-On the terrace (running the length of the river and is 2-3 km. wide) water is fresh and very high in supply. Tube wells of 60-70 m. depth have an output of 100 litre per second.

-Off the terrace and for 15-20 km. south, water is fresh, but the quantity is far less: 5 litres a second. (This explains why so many villages are located south west and south east of the city: water!)

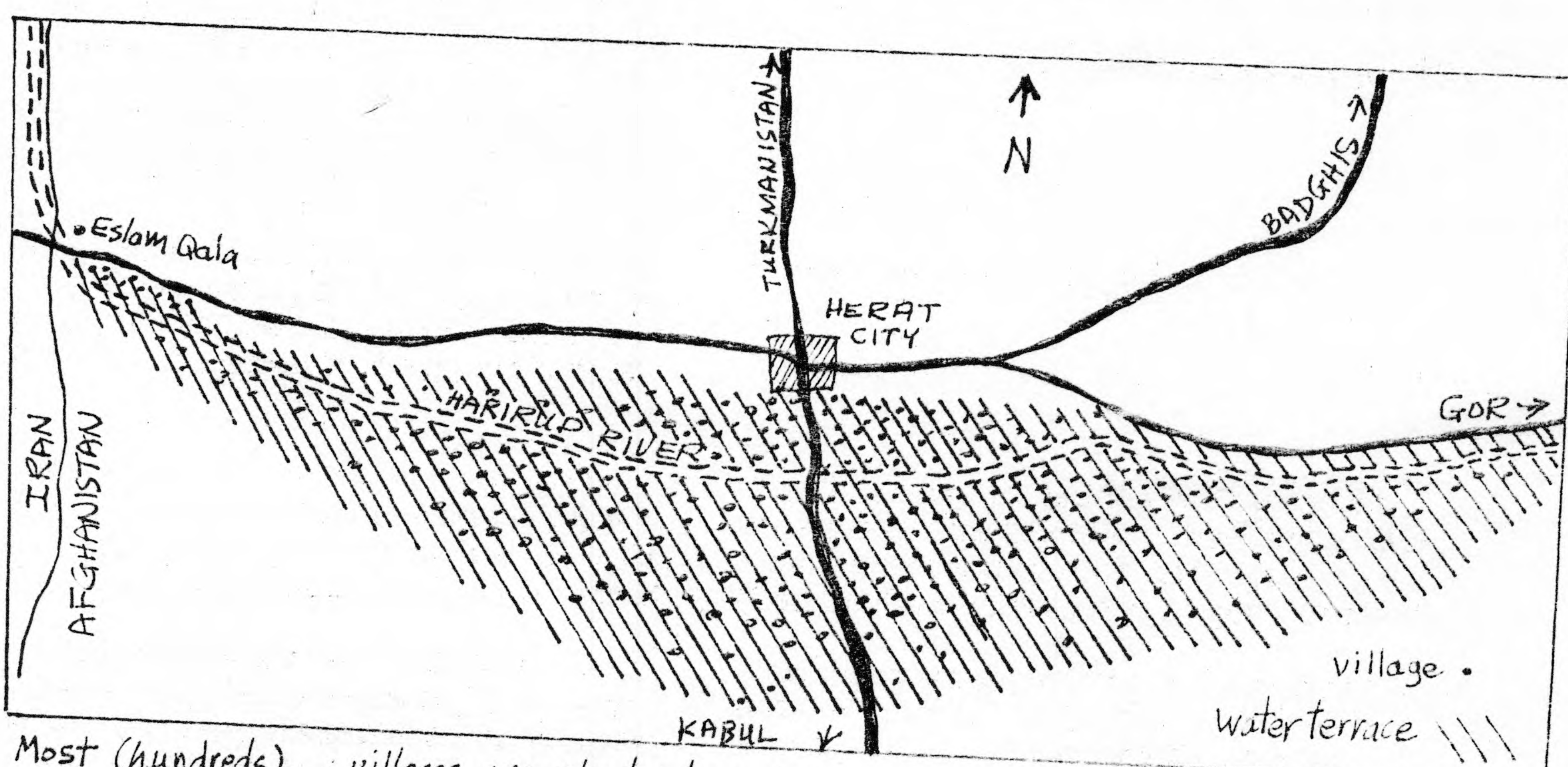
VULNERABILITIES

Precipitation is only 18 cm. (7 inches).

Crops in most of the province are dependent on irrigation but there is heavy destruction. In at least 4 districts it is 100% destroyed (Ghurian, Qarooq, Pushtoon Zargoon, Guzarah).

Where it exists, in the rest of the province, water is brackish (salty) but people use it anyway. Often it is six times the acceptable salt limit of 1,000 micro-mohs. Wells often have 6,000 micro-mohs, water so salty it takes like a strong solution.
Very high incidence of diarhea suggests other water problems.

Due to lack of water_most of the rest of the south west of the province is uninhabited.



Most (hundreds) villages are clustered on the Herat plain where there is water.
About 80% of the villages west of the north-south highway are destroyed.

b) Trees

Herat city is lined on both sides of all streets with trees: fully mature pines and poplars. City parks have dense stands of the pines and they surround government buildings. Although Heratis complain that some were cut during the war, there is very little evidence of it. Someone ought to study how so many trees survive. Do Herat people have an unusual awareness or affection? If so, how come? One Afghan said, no, Herat people are not tree lovers: the wood is no good. It's poor quality even for construction, therefore is not exportable unlike high quality woods of the eastern provinces.

But the rest of the province is stripped of trees: only about 0.35% of the land cover is in trees or shrubs (see Land Cover Facts)

The only alternate fuel is kerosene or gas imported from Iran, both are expensive.

Tree cutting continues.

c) Pesticides

During the Soviet occupation, Afghanistan became a dumping ground for dangerous chemicals, and they have been in use in the major sunnpest and locust infestation of the west and north. Much of these pesticides are now in storage and in poor condition.

These stockpiles, however have been inventoried by NGOs and some awareness has been raised by them about the hazards and use of safer chemicals. With the end of hostilities in Herat and transportation corridors opened to Iran and Turkmenistan, it is possible to bring in safer replacements.

d) Wind

Herat appears to have huge potential for wind energy but it is not being exploited at all now. The history of windmills shows that they were first invented in the 7th century in Persia, which Herat was part of then. Diagrams of the earliest windmills show that they were the same design as those in use in Herat up to the late 1960s (vertical blades). They dotted the landscape of Herat and along the south of the country. Then they were used to power grist mills, but by the 60's they had fallen out of use. A few ruins still exist.

No windmills exist now and no-one has plans to do research (except, a proposal connected with this report includes a feasibility study).

With Herat's forests depleted, the need for cooking and heating (long cold winters) fuel, it may be wise to explore wind energy as a source of electricity for cooking and heating.

Herat's Salma dam is partly destroyed and unable to supply electricity. Rural areas never had electricity.

The government now supplies Herat city with electricity for 2-3 hours/day, every two days, from generators fired with imported fuel. UN, NGO some houses and most shops also run their own generators, consuming large amounts of fuel, causing noise and air pollution.

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Herat, Afghanistan

Community Profile and Report

1993

This report is from an observation trip carried out by Jane Thomas from June 26 to July 25, 1993, sponsored by DACAAR. This report is for public circulation. For further information contact Jane Thomas.

As stated above, there are 120 days of 30 knot winds. Wind data in Herat over many years was collected by the Kabul government.

But it is not known if this data still exists.

People over the age of 45 will remember the windmills functioning, suggesting local acceptance.

e) Sun

There also appears to be very good potential for solar energy in Herat although import of solar panels is likely unwise; due to cost, distance to servicing and replacements.

A few panels are now in use in Herat at UN offices to power communications equipment.

As solar cookers have already proven popular with Afghan refugees in the camps in Pakistan, they might prove-out in Herat.

Kabul is known to have good solar energy potential (rarely more than 3 consecutive days without full sun). Herat may be even more sunny.

There are no known definite plans to explore solar energy in Herat but UNDP states that IAM recently did a mission to Herat to see about solar possibilities.

f) Air

There are no factories or other sources of air pollution in the province. And the quantity of vehicles is not high, so that air quality seems very good.

Air quality is very good except during the 120 of wind, sand and dust fill the air. And as stated, generators are becoming a noise and pollution problem.

g) Wildlife

Little has ever been documented about wildlife in the country and fragile ecosystems during the war have had no attention at all.

But the war also pretty well halted hunting and the commercialization of wildlife, especially big game animals.

Very little baseline data. Very little awareness of conservation.

V: GENDER ANALYSIS

a) Mobility

In Herat, not only do men and women women live in two separate "worlds"; so do urban and rural women.

City women move around with relative ease. A fair number are educated and work as teachers, doctors, health workers. A few work for NGOs or UN. In all city bazaars, there are nearly as many women walking around as men. All women are dressed either in burqas or the Iranian chaddar (ankle length).

Rural women are more strictly in purdah and confined to their compounds. Herat rural areas are as conservative as Pushtoon areas. Women are not seen working in the fields, bringing wood or water, nor do they go to market.

b) Agriculture

Men do all the agriculture work associated with crops; ploughing, weeding, threshing, harvesting and moving livestock. Men, boys and small girls sometimes are shepherds. In the compound, women milk the animals, make butter and buttermilk to sell. Sometimes women go with male members of the family to pick fruit which they dry.

c) Production of Goods

Goods in the rural household are sparse but most are made by women, usually as part of their marriage dowry; cushions, sleeping mats, thick blankets, covers, decorative embroidered pieces and family clothing. In very many Herati homes there were also carpets. Pre-war, a major income earner for families in this province was handmade carpets. In Herat,silk production also was a common cottage industry of women.

Men are the builders. They are the carpenters, metalsmiths, potters and tradesmen. Other goods are those which are imported and sold at shops.

d) Services

Only men are shopkeepers or traders. Teachers in rural areas are almost exclusively males. Only men go do the family shopping and only men market the carpets.

Male doctors are more common than female doctors at government BHUs and, unlike Pushtoon areas, they may attend women patients. They refer gynaecological cases to women doctors at the gynaecological clinic at the provincial hospital.

In the city some males teachers are teaching in girls schools.

e) Household

In Herat, men bring the firewood and water. Sometimes little girls bring the water. Women are almost solely responsible for looking after the children but men are fairly attentive of the children and often take one or two with them on outings or on business. Very often children are working in the fields. Women do all the cooking, breadmaking, cleaning.

f) Protection

The Herati, like Afghan in general, family unit is still the strongest of all units, above village, tribal or ethnic group. Family custom is to protect, even pamper children, adolescents, single

women and the elderly. Men are the recognized guardians but women are the ones providing the practical daily care.

However, the family unit has been extremely strained by the war. No figures are available for Herat but there are thousands of widows and orphans (800 widows, 5,000 orphans registered with government but this is only partial). No matter the customs, extended families are able to absorb only so much.

In Herat city there are many women with no support at all, practically living on the street. Their husbands were killed, their houses bombed. Some of the same women are disabled themselves. There are a fairly high number of "street kids" in the city, for which UNICEF has opened a shelter for one hundred.

g) Health and Education

For the poor rural woman, there is very little access to health facilities. The pregnancy rate is very high and most have no access to trained midwives, pre or post natal care. (Largely why UNICEF's State of the World's Children, 1993 says Afghan mother and child death rates are still the second highest in the world).

Rural girls and women have rarely had access to education. The literacy rate in Herat, some well informed sources say, is practically nil.

Although the poverty is common to both males and females, at least men can go out to seek health care.

h) Urban Women Helping Rural Women

The main hope for rural women may be urban women, at least to start. Trained women doctors, health workers, teachers, etc., are needed to do service and pass on knowledge to rural women.

Although this is happening, it is very little. Except for the Dept. of Health's, 10 traditional birth attendant trainers, women as beneficiaries in the UNHCR/BAAG shelter project, and a small NRC carpet project (10 trainees), there are no known projects for rural Herat women. One part of the problem is to get urban women to go to the rural areas, for a combination of reasons; their own purdah or family restrictions, their own reluctance to face hardship, historical lack of trust or respect between urban and rural people, etc. To help rural women, first means extra support and encouragement to city women and probably their families.

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VI: AID/CO-ORDINATION

About 20 foreign aid workers now live in Herat, working for UN or NGOs. Co-ordination is excellent, especially since most live and eat in the UN guest house and there is so little else to do. Morning, noon and night the shop talk keeps everyone informed on quite a deep level. They are producing a lot of information and documents on Herat but these do not exist in the Peshawar, ARIC collection. Also, in Herat there is extreme shortage of information on Herat and elsewhere that is available in Peshawar, even basic topographic maps, valuable national reports, etc. Information swaps would benefit everybody.

UN Agencies Present

- UNOCHA
- WFP
- UNDP
- WHO
- UNICEF
- FAO
- UNHCR
- IOM

International NGOs Present

- Medcine Du Monde (MDM)
- Norweign Refugee Council (NRC)
- Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR)
- British Afghanistan Agencies Group (BAAG)
- German Afghanistan Foundation (GAF)
- International Committe of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Iranian Red Crescent

Afghan NGOs Present

- Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance
- Organization for Mine Awareness and Relief (OMAR)

Herat NGOs Present

- Basad

Herat Women's NGOs Present

- Muslim Sisters of Afghanistan
- Tanzeem-i-Koharani Musselmani Hoza-i-Junab Gharb

Government Womens' Social Welfare Cell

- Mirmanah Tullanah

VII: INTERVIEWS, DISCUSSIONS, VISITS, REFERENCES

-Amir Ismail Khan
-Dr. Yousef (Ismail Khan's P.A.)
-Fazil, UNOCHA
-Dr. Sam Yousef, WHO
-Rudy Rodrigez, UNICEF
-Raheema, Women's Programes, UNICEF
-Dr. Tunawar, FAO
-Garrry Helseth, UNDP
-Steve Spain, Adel Jasmine, UNHCR
-Suzanna Cox, Julia Purceu, Vemal, BAAG
-Eng. Hashmatullah Siddiqi, UNOCHA
-Zaiodeen, Dept. Agriculture, Director Ag. Extension
-Director Plant Protection
-Director Sericulture Farm
-workers: -agricultural research station
    -mulberry tree plantation, Urdu Khan
    -trial seed fields
-Riasad Taleem Tarbia, Director of Education
-Hujara Mashal, Principal, Gowardshah Girls School
-Anisa Fazali, Vice Principal, Gowardshah Girls School
-Aziza Kamagar, Govt. Social Welfare Cell, Women's Section
-Amana Afzali, Muslim Sisters of Afghanistan
-Haji Zahir, Abdul Wahab, et al, carpet dealers
-Noor Al Haq Saba, President, Herat University
-students in art, economics, Herat University
-women of 4 families, Baraman Village
-Hyattullah, NRC
-Dr. Najimi, Yousef, Veeyar, Nafisa, Eng. Alia, DACAAR
-Fazel Karim, Director, OMAR
-Sayed Aqa, Director, MCPA
-Dr. Ahmad Fazee, Medial Officer, OMAR
-Eng. Sayed Jawed, HAFO, Peshawar

Afghanistan; Louis Dupree, 1980

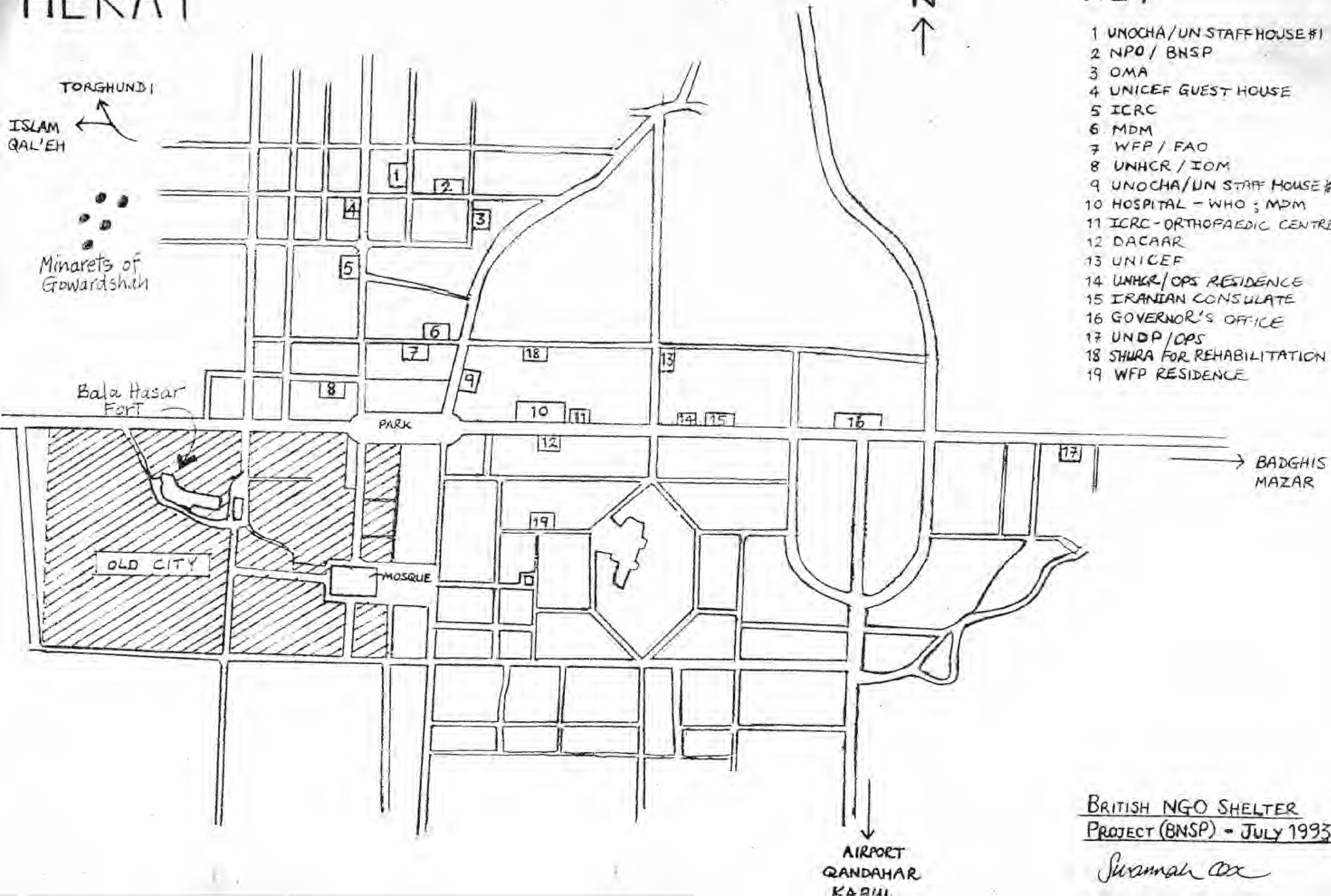
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HERAT

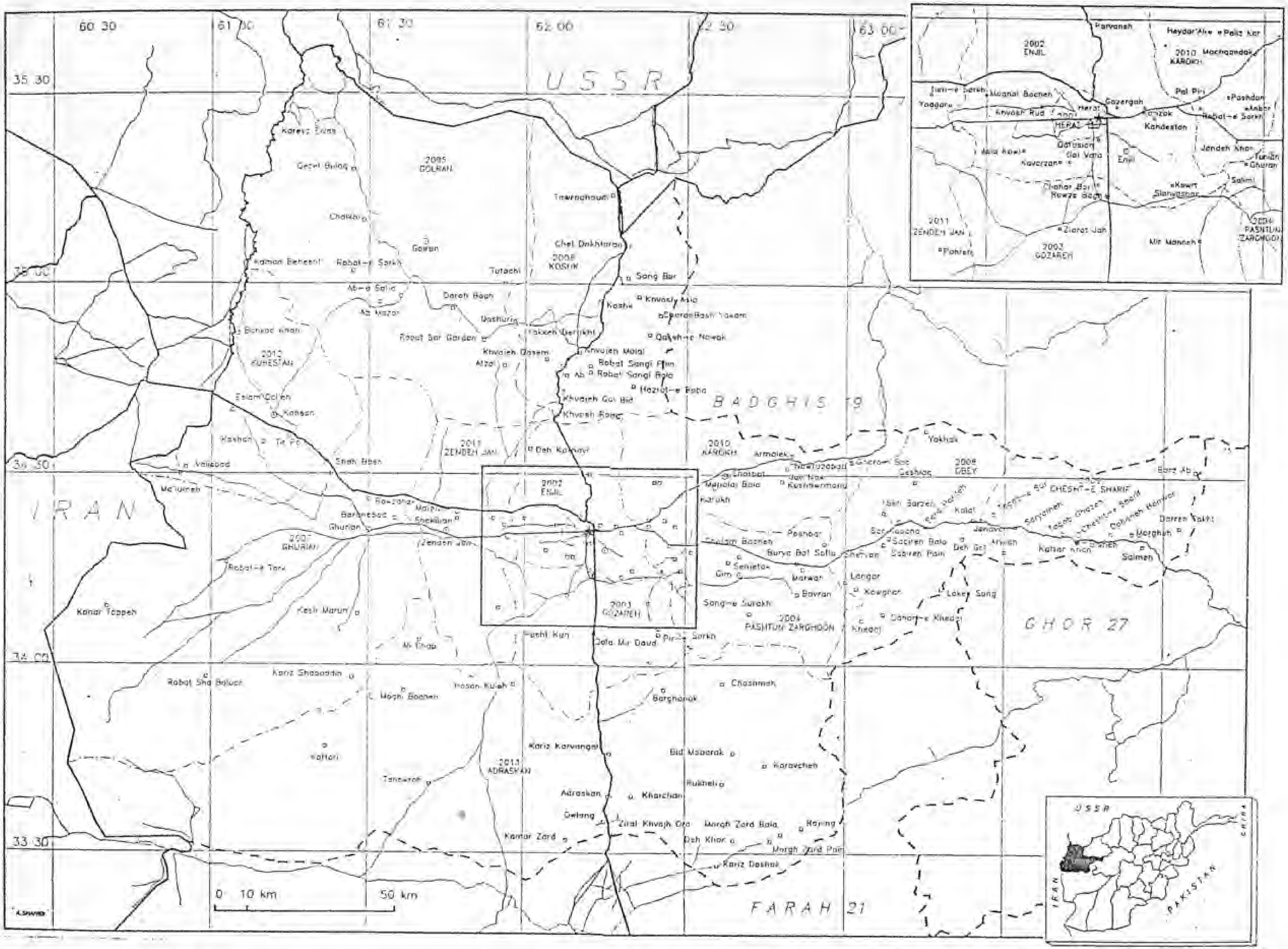


KEY

1 UNOCHA/UN STAFF HOUSE #1
2 NPO / BNSP
3 OMA
4 UNICEF GUEST HOUSE
5 ICRC
6 MDM
7 WFP / FAO
8 UNHCR / IOM
9 UNOCHA/UN STAFF HOUSE #2
10 HOSPITAL – WHO ; MDM
11 ICRC - ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE
12 DACAAR
13 UNICEF
14 UNHCR / OPS RESIDENCE
15 IRANIAN CONSULATE
16 GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
17 UNDP / OPS
18 SHURA FOR REHABILITATION
19 WFP RESIDENCE

BRITISH NGO SHELTER PROJECT (BNSP) – JULY 1993

Susannah Cox



Districts & Roads of Afghanistan
Edition 1.0 (Nov.'90)
UNIDATA / Mapping Service
Peshawar, Pakistan

Province and code:

HERAT 20

1234 = District (UCD) Code
DISTRICT = District (UCD) name

FORWARD

Purpose

The purpose of this report is simply to inform the aid community about some observations and to encourage assistance to the Herat area of Afghanistan. It is **not** intended as a formal needs analysis, therefore no formal recommendations are made.

Background

I was assigned to Herat by DACAAR to check the feasibility of a specific project: working with influential women of the city to help them get more organized and active in reconstruction, especially to benefit poor, rural women. Unfortunately, this approach proved to be not feasible due to differences between Herat's three existing womens' organizations.

Results:

Project Proposed: "Herat Village Development Pilot Project"

My preference had been to lead Herat city women to design their own community-based development work for rural areas. As this was not possible, I designed a project that instead puts women and men in villages at the top decision-making level. In my opinion, this is the way we all should be working in Afghanistan and is an example of how to avoid the dependence problems created by aid from Peshawar (see page 5) in eastern provinces. The project will experiment with and put into practice all the principles of real participatory, community-based **"development"**.

Invitation to Participate

Funding for this project is being negotiated in Canada by CARE Canada and CARE International which will be listed as implementing agencies (with myself as the project consultant, director, trainer). However, additional funders are being sought. See details below.

Project Objectives:

To directly and indirectly assist women; encourage respect and trust between urban and rural Afghans; produce, test and refine a model for Afghan village-based, sustainable development

Beneficiaries/Duration

A three year project, benefitting at least 3,000 men, women and children who are of vulnerable groups, are repatriating refugees or returning internally displaced.

Location
Project to be concentrated in three villages about 10 km. apart in totally destroyed area south west of Herat city. As these villages develop their own organization and plan and undertake activities, they will be encouraged to pass on the same know-how and encouragement to nearby villages, resulting in several project "satellite" villages.

Activities/ Project Concept

The entire emphasis of this project is on social development: encouraging villagers to form organizations for reconstruction purposes. Highly trained and monitored project field workers will help villages, in separate but similar mens' and womens' programmes, identify problems in order of priority and solve these, putting their own and outside resources to best use. Concepts for this project are very loosely based on such models as the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, which are based on three pillars; a) village organization b)transfer of skill to village people c)creation of a village-based, self-managed fund (the latter of which is the most uncertain to undertake in Afghanistan, although this is not a new idea in the country (see Anjomans, page 8).

Activities: Sub-Projects

This above main project will supply only the facilitation for community organization, planning, resource identification, sub-project planning, monitoring, etc. It does not supply any physical resources for any sub-projects which will be chosen by villages. It is predicted however, that high priorities will be for housing construction, irrigation and water well repair, health, revenue generation, etc.

Costs/Funders-Co-Funders Needed:

-**Main Project**: The Herat Village Development Pilot Project costs $190,000 per year for three years (total $570,000 US). The Canadian source is seriously interested in funding approximately $130,000 (per year) of this project. **Needed**: local funder to fund the balance of about $60,000 per year.

-**Sub-Projects**: When the project starts and women and men in their villages choose their priority problems and make a joint village plan, funders of these small sub-projects will be needed.

-Are you interested to fund either of the above? This project is one way of assisting in Herat, especially women in Herat, and may be especially suitable for NGOs which do not wish to locate there. Your project overhead costs will be reduced and your inputs will have longer viability, with this project's day-to-day contact in the villages.

For more information and the full proposal, please contact Jane Thomas

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Facts

Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis

HERAT FACTS

1. **Location:** far west of Afghanistan, bordering on Iran and Turkmanistan

2. **Size:** Capital, Herat City: 45 sq. km province: 38,799 sq. km

3. **Distances:** nautical km. (as the crow flies)
   Capital, Herat City:
   -114 km. from Iranian border (Islam Qala)
   -662 km. from Kabul
   - 868 km. from Peshawar, Pakistan
   -306 km. from Mashad, Iran
   - 160 km. from Torgundy, Turkmanistan border

4. **Importance:**-Herat city is one of country's four main cities
   -economic and service centre of west, west central and north of country
   - main transit point for all refugees returning from Iran

5. **Elevation:** -500 to 1,000 m. above sea level

6. **Climate:**

   Temperature:
   -mean maximum and minimum: -3 to 35 degrees celsius (December and July)

   Precipitation:
   -18 centimetres (7 inches, rain and snow combined)

   Wind:
   -famous for annual "120 days of wind" (June-September) which blows almost constantly, night and day at around 30 knots with gusts up to 35-40 knots (trees waving around violently, sheets of sand and dust battering everything).

7. **Ethnicity:** Louis Dupree's pre-war book, "Afghanistan" shows the following groups in Herat:
   -Farsiwan
   -Taimuri Aimaq
   -Jemshidi Aimaq
   -Turkoman
   -Pushtoon

8. **Language:** - Predominantly: Farsi Persian

9. **Religion:** -Majority: Hanafi Sunni
   -Minority: Imami Shi'a
   -estimates, like everywhere in Afghanistan, vary from 10-30% Shi'a
   -a small Jewish population lived in Herat pre-war. Eight synagogues still exist in the Old City.

10. **Topography:**-province covered with low, treeless, wind-eroded greyish-brown "mountains up to 1,000 m.
   -running east and west through the mountains is the plain of Herat (300 km. long, 50 km. wide)
   -through the plain runs the Harirud River, turning the plain into an oasis of green .
   -Herat city is located at the mid-point of the plain's length, about 10 km. north of the river, probably due to flooding in earlier times.

11. **Water Drainage/Irrigation:**

-Herat and the Harirud river is in one of the country's four drainage systems. This one starts at the Harirud head-water, dead-centre of the country, and is a scoop facing westward. Two other rivers, the Murgahb and Kashkan start in Herat and flow north into Turkmanistan.

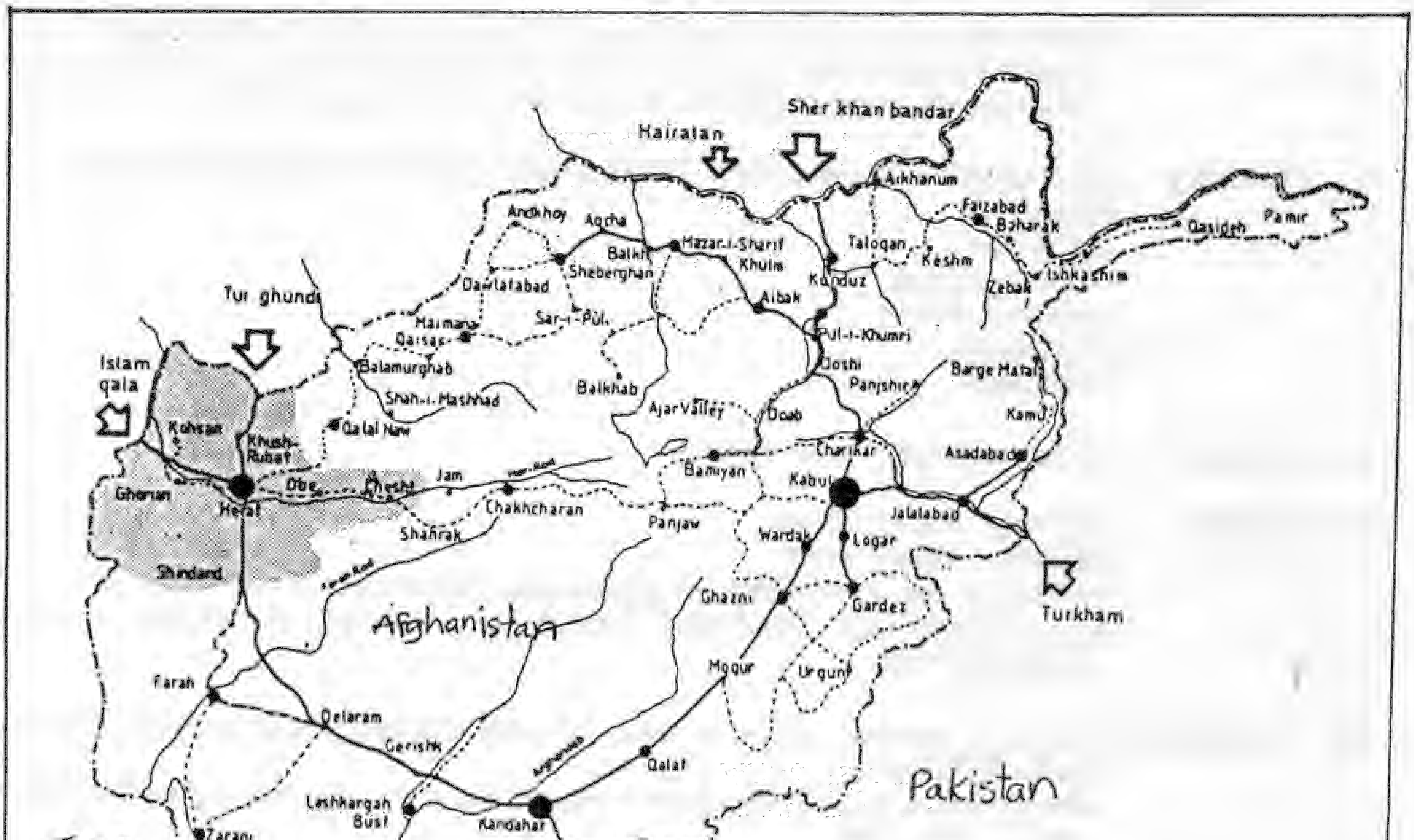
-The Harirud flows 650 km. to the west and then north, forming the Afghanistan-Iran-Turkmanistan borders

-North of the city and river run a range of mountains parallel to the river. From the mountains the flat plain slopes slightly southward, creating drainage to the river and a high water table from the river, south (see Environmental Analysis).

-The Harirud provides about 6% of all irrigated land in the country. Many kareez drain toward the river and about 80 canals branch off it.

12. **Land Cover:** The DAI Afghanistan Land Cover Report (1993) from satellite imagery in 1990, shows Herat's land cover in hectares:

-176,299 active irrigated agriculture
- 66,495 inactive irrigated agriculture
-139,054 rainfed agriculture
- 43,721 barren
- 15,429 forest, shrub
- 22,085 water
- 1,054 densely settled
- 3,782,122 rangeland, wetlands, other



I: MOTIVATIONAL/ATTITUDINAL

a) Atmosphere

CAPACITIES

Typical of Afghans, Heratis seem to have an extremely strong and positive attitude about getting on with life, despite 15 years of war. In Herat the atmosphere is strongly positive with signs of repatriation and reconstruction everywhere: the bazaars are open and packed with goods. Freshly made, drying mud bricks run up and down streets and sidewalks. If all shops aren't open, they are under repair and renovation: you can hardly move down a bazaar sidewalk without stepping over or around carpenters sawing and hammering on new store fixtures. The I.O.M. transit centre at the city's main intersection is a jam of repatriates loading and unloading record size collections of stuff they are taking home to places north: Badghris, Faryab, Mazar-i-Sharif, etc. About 25 Yurts donated by the government of Mongolia, in a nearby compound, house returning families overnight.

One night when it was almost dark, I saw a man at his bombed-out, caved-in house, in the raging wind (see climate) measuring the remaining window frames for glass. Outside a UN office a huge mud-puddle disappeared as a family used the water and dirt of the road to make their bricks. A fountain in the median of the main street went from neglected weediness to shooting sprays and pools with kids playing. The Herat Car Wash opened, selling cars packed in bumper-to-bumper, imported from United Arab Emirates. Even in the upper class part of town, loads of goods started appearing on the street outside the fine, if run down, homes. The well-off families are coming back from Iran with washing machines, big TVs, sofas, and generators. Downtown, in the bombed-out western section, crews are shovelling-out debris, levelling spots for building. Rocket holes are being filled in on the nearby partly destroyed places. Every day, three or four times, you hear very loud, deep "booms!": the de-mining gang (OMAR) at work on the city's nine minefields.

Everyone I met showed an infectious level of enthusiasm: the "Amir" (premier) Amir Ismail Khan, the president of the university, art students, the government director of agricultural extension, ag. workers, the director of education, high school teachers, villagers building houses.

It's especially amazing to think that all of this started happening only 16 months ago, when the communist government fell and Ismail Khan took over.

VULNERABILITIES

Aid agencies are even newer in Herat, all have set-up only in the past 6 to 8 months (see list). During the war, Herat had almost no outside help at all, due mainly to the great distance to the aid centre, Peshawar, Pakistan. While lack of aid undoubtedly contributed to hardship, it may have had positive points as well. It did not build up any expectations amongst the people and did not teach them any bad habits (unlike the eastern provinces where NGOs have been concentrated. There, very unfortunately, and as everybody knows now, people have been "taught" to depend on aid. Signs of dependence are rife.)

Herat people demonstrate the refreshing and re-assuring Afghan sense of "I'll-do-it-myself". They are way ahead of the aid agencies, doing what needs to be done by themselves with no outside help. Most probably don't even know that some help is available.

One has to wonder, "will this last?" The irony is that Herat's peacefulness, security and even its self-reliance is attracting the attention of a lot more aid agencies who want or need to move from Pakistan into Afghanistan. The question is: Will a repeat of Peshawar/1989 occur? Will well intended money flood in? Will speed to do so result in all kinds of relief style hand-outs (projects given out like bags of wheat)? Will these result in the same kinds of dependence problems created in the east? Will Herat be the next place for an aid invasion?

At this time, even though the UN is acting in the emergency mode, Herat is not in what is usually considered a state of emergency. Although there is extreme poverty and malnutrition is common, there is no starvation. We need to go slower in Herat, especially to understand that culture and set of conditions and build on those.

Co-ordination between agencies is outstandingly good and those present seem to have learned lessons from Peshawar (and elsewhere) about how not to "do aid". This excellent base should be built on to help without over-helping.

b) Population, Refugees, Repatriation, Internally Displaced

CAPACITIES

Data from UNHCR and Thomas Eighmey's Demographic report show dramatic shifts in population. More than half the province's population fled the country and three quarters of city people fled. But refugees were more than replaced by internally displaced. During the war (1990) the population was higher than before the war.

Population:	Province:	a)-pre-war (1979):................776,614	
		b)-refugees to Iran:...................487,000	(57%)
		c)-population (1990)..............870,404	
		d)-repatriation since 1992......164,000	(30%)
	City:	a)-pre-war (1979).................138,613	
		b)-refugees to Iran....................100,000	(76%)
		c)-population in 1990.............166,694	
		d)-repatriation since 1992.........32,000	

VULNERABILITIES

It's probably true to say that most refugees are still returning voluntarily. But UNHCR has publically reported that forced repatriation from Iran is becoming alarmingly common. Beginning in January of this year, Afghan men were picked up on the streets in Iranian cities, had their identity cards torn up in front of them, then imprisoned "because they had no cards". As they were "illegals" then, they were imprisoned then trucked to the border, leaving behind families who didn't know the whereabouts of their men, if they were dead or alive. Last month a whole Afghan refugee village was bulldozed and the people sent to the border. Early in July, the English language Teheran Times announced a new government programme coming into existence, to "help their Afghan brothers". As of July 23 all unregistered Afghans (700,000, so they say) were to call on government offices "to get registered." UNHCR in Herat began gearing-up for what that really meant, and sure enough on July 24 a fresh wave of deportees started arriving and is continuing. The Government of Iran denies that deportation is happening and refers on the BBC and Radio Iran to this as Western propaganda. While I was in Herat, a special UNHCR protection officer arrived from Geneva to investigate. He returned with the case, which will continue to be presented to Iranian officials by UNHCR.

All refugees returning now are in an especially vulnerable situation. For rural people, it is too late in the season to plant crops. Most irrigation is destroyed anyway, most have no houses and there are landmines in uncountable places. As described below, Herat has a high destruction rate.

II: SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONAL

a) Government, Peace, Security

CAPACITIES

What Herat most has going for it, unlike other places in the country, is a government, peace and security. The "Amir" Ismail Khan, who was the main Mujahideen commander throughout the war, took over in April 1992. His abilities as a former army officer and successful commander show-up in the speed in which he has been able to put some kind of civil service together again. There are several functioning ministries, and each I met seems to be going flat-out doing all they can do, even is there is practically no money to do it.

Ismail Khan does seem to have strong, sincere, popular support: people talk about him in revered tones and his picture is everywhere. Probably a large contribution to this is his success in disarming the population last year. In a whole month I did not hear a single shot fired! (Although, oddly, you do very occasionally see a guy with a kaleshnikov on the street: if you walk all over town, you might see one or two -always very young-in one day. Nobody could ever explain to me who these guys are or how they get away with it. I didn't even see a single armed policeman). Also, unlike other commanders, he doesn't set a particularly ostentatious example. He has the usual spiffy land cruiser and office but the windows in the front of his office building as still glass-less: undoubtedly shot out by Mujahideen themselves in the last days of fighting.

Outside this building at the street is a sign that says, "God freed Afghanistan also." One day walking past the sign with a former Mujahid, the Mujahid said, "I'd like to ask Ismail Khan why he put the word "also". Afghanistan was freed **before** all the others" (Soviet republics). If this man chose to, he could probably walk into the Amir's office and ask him: he is quite accessible although everybody wants to see him. His office (open up to 8 or 9 every night) is constantly packed with a stream of people to see him.

When the Amir is not receiving strings of people appealing for something (shuras, UN and NGO delegations, journalists: recently the Economist, New York Times, Time, Australia Broadcasting Corporation) he is off on "campaigns" in other provinces, more of less drawing them into his fold. The third week of July he was in Badghris, amongst other things, asking people to stop cutting the pistachio trees there.

In my meeting with The Amir, to discuss assistance to Herat women, he showed sincere interest and surprising awareness (given that information is hard to come by) of the extremely poor conditions in which so many women live. He said thousands of women need assistance urgently. We discussed ways to help, and he asked me details of how NGOs (especially Afghan NGOs in Peshawar) were helping women. Health and revenue generation work was what seemed of most interest to him and he offered any assistance to make such work happen (assigning his personal assistant to help me). We didn't specifically talk about female education but actions suggest there is strong government support for female education, at least in the city (see Education).

Top and mid-level civil servants I met do seem truly committed and very hard working. But, not surprisingly, corruption is said to be leaking in from the bottom. The government can afford only tiny wages (see **Wages and Prices**) so some employees take what extra they can get.

VULNERABILITIES

One has to wonder, is the peace and security of Herat temporary? Everything seems to depend on one person: Ismail Khan. As any popular leader, he has enemies (not very many but there are some) and others simply are after their own power. If anything, it is his own relative liberalism that might get him in trouble. The mullahs seem to watch his every move. Could they or others undermine him? Could the mess-up continuing in Kabul, somehow bring him down?

b) Shuras, Hashar, Anjomans

CAPACITIES

At the village level, many villages are coming together again. Some in Herat have shuras (councils) but a lot don't. In any case, traditionally shuras (or as they were known pre-war in Herat, "majless", literally "meeting") were decision makers, not necessarily organizers. More actual village organization throughout Afghanistan was done by "hashar" and in some places, village "anjomans" (associations).

The tradition for "hashar" ("work bees" to do large community jobs or help an individual harvest, repair storm damage, etc.) is alive and well in Herat. On a Friday I saw a group of 50 men repairing a canal, organized by a farmer. But "hashar" has it's limits now. When everyone has to re-build, everybody wants to re-build their own house first.

In many places in the country, pre-war, anjomans were started and managed by villages themselves; led by elders and the malik. In some places they started and managed their own credit and loan schemes, with all villagers paying a certain amount into the anjoman monthly. Poor people, with one guarantor, could get a loan to build a house, buy a cow, do a wedding, etc. For those especially concerned now with Islamic economics, the anjoman had an especially compatible business loan arrangement. If somebody wanted to start a business; buy a transport vehicle, open a shop, etc. the anjoman entered into partnership, sharing profit and loss. We greatly need research on the anjomans and their roles throughout the country. I didn't explore this subject at all in Herat.

In the cities there were also women's anjomans, doing charitable work for women and children. Three of these exist now in Herat.

III: PHYSICAL/MATERIAL

a) Destruction

VULNERABILITIES

During the war, Herat province was more or less divided down the middle, separated by the north-south highway. The communists controlled the east side, the Mujahideen the west side. The dividing line runs right through the centre of the city.

Even now, the relative force of each side is very clear. Almost all the destruction occurs on the west, the Mujahideen controlled side. The communist government, with its vastly superior supply of weapons, simply flattened their opponents. From downtown Herat, west to the Iranian border, 114 km. away, 80% of the villages and buildings are destroyed. In districts further north west, the destruction rate is the same.

The eastern half is almost untouched. Government buildings, which are located in this area, although in run-down condition, have no major damage. Only one building has it's roof rocketed-in, a few have black smoke scars, some windows are broken. Out in the villages to the east, there is very little destruction but because refugees fled from this area as well, some houses are collapsed from weather conditions and lack of maintainance.

Due to water supply, most villages in the province are located south of the city and river, on both sides of the highway, radiating out to the west and east for 15-20 km. It's a dense pack of hundreds of villages. All of ones south west of the city are destroyed.

Driving through this area, one wonders, how on earth can anybody re-build this place? It is kilometre after kilometre of rubble heaped on rubble.

Reconstruction, Skills, Resources

CAPACITIES

But here and there a single man is digging a hole, boys are carrying bricks in a wheel barrow or groups of men with a truck backed-in are loading earth. Fresh mud bricks lay in the sun wherever there is a clear spot.

Being built again, are the traditional mud brick houses with domed roofs. These houses are the ideal in modern architecture: made completely from local materials and delightfully adapted to the climate. On the roof is a wind shaft, like a chimney but the intake is faced westward to catch the wind. At floor level, the effect is a soft draft. Some interior walls slope a little outward under an overhang, to bring in light and additional draft. There are even indigenous air conditioners. Over an open window is built a screen box, into which a particular kind of weed is stuffed. It filters the dust and, when wetted, cools the room and sends in a spicy, fresh smell.

On the hill north east of the city, towards the mass graves, is a village of dombed houses that were never bombed. In the late afternoon sun, when the shadows are spread out, the beauty of this architecture is most apparent. It is an orderly pattern of repeating curves, boxes and horizontal lines in many shades of one colour.

b) The Economy

b)i) Agriculture:

VULNERABILITIES

Afghanistan's agriculture production declined 50% during the war. FAO says that Herat's production is still at about 50% of pre-war levels. This is due to the damaged irrigation, the locust sunnpest problem, reduced number of farmers, poor seed qualities and so on.

CAPACITIES

Herat's economy, like that of the whole country, has been mostly dependent on agriculture. Herat is located in what was the historic "bread basket" of the country, the western prime agricultural land dotted from Herat to Mazar-i-Sharif. According to FAO, this region produced 93% of the country's food, leading to national self-sufficiency in wheat by the late 1970's.

Main crops have been; what, barley, corn, rice, cotton, melons, peaches and 62 varieties of grapes and raisins. The government's department of agriculture, with FAO assistance, is back in the seed multiplication business, with several hundred hectares planted in wheat, vegetables and fruit. Of special pride to Heratis are the grapes. At the fruit farm, a Mujahid brought a tray of 10 varieties of grapes (green, brown, blue) to sample; ranging in taste from a peppermint after-taste to, well, grape. At the wheat seed fields, due to lack of equipment, government workers were hand-harvesting 60 hectares.

b)ii) Carpet Making/Sheep Industry

CAPACITIES

After agricultural products, Afghanistan's main export product was carpets. Their production employed hundreds of thousands of people, mainly women. Herat was one of the main carpet locations in the country.

A great many women have carpet making skills but are unable to afford starting up again. To start again would cost about $120 US, per set of equipment and supplies (steel frame loom, comb, scissors, enough dyed wool for a 2m. carpet, warp thread). All sources consulted say this should be a priority, to help women start making family incomes again.